

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 893  
By Cooper B

A RESOLUTION to honor and congratulate the owners, publishers, and staff of the *Memphis Tri-State Defender* upon the celebration of the newspaper's 55<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly should salute those noble publications that, because of the extraordinary efforts of their founders, owners, journalists, and editors, are highly regarded as informative, culturally relevant sources of local, national, and world news; and

WHEREAS, the *Memphis Tri-State Defender* is one such estimable publication whose owners, staff, and readership will celebrate the newspaper's 55<sup>th</sup> Anniversary on November 3, 2006; and

WHEREAS, one of the oldest continuously published African-American newspapers in the South, the *Memphis Tri-State Defender* serves the greater Memphis community in Tennessee, Arkansas, and Mississippi; and

WHEREAS, the *Memphis Tri-State Defender* has been renowned for a commitment of service to the African-American community in particular and to the greater Memphis community in general; and

WHEREAS, during its fifty-five years of estimable service, the *Memphis Tri-State Defender* has sought to promote and protect the constitutional guarantees and rights of all citizens, regardless of race, creed, or color, and to uphold the principle of equality of opportunity in employment, education, politics, and all fields of human endeavor; and

WHEREAS, John Herman Henry Sengstacke, owner of the *Chicago Defender*, founded the *Memphis Tri-State Defender* and published its first issue on November 3, 1951; and

WHEREAS, John Sengstacke hired Lewis O. Swingler as the *Memphis Tri-State Defender's* first executive editor and publisher; throughout the years, the *Memphis Tri-State Defender* has benefited from the astute and superb leadership of several other executive editors, including L. Alex Wilson, Whittier A. Sengstacke, Sr., Robert A. Sengstacke, Audrey McGhee, and Marzie G. Thomas; and

WHEREAS, the *Memphis Tri-State Defender* provided a critical information resource during the Civil Rights Era, galvanizing and strengthening the African-American community during its struggle for equality and civil liberties; and

WHEREAS, John Sengstacke worked with President Franklin D. Roosevelt for employment opportunities for African-Americans in the United States Postal Service and persuaded the President to include an African-American reporter in a White House news conference for the first time in United States history; and

WHEREAS, John Sengstacke was named by President Harry Truman to a commission formed to desegregate and integrate the United States Military; he also founded the National Newspaper Publishers Association in 1940, in an effort to strengthen and unify African-American owned newspapers; he was awarded the Presidential Citizens Medal posthumously by President Bill Clinton in 2000; and

WHEREAS, the readers, employees, and owners of the *Memphis Tri-State Defender* have bravely fought the evils of racial segregation, hate, and violence, and today, the *Memphis Tri-State Defender* continues to serve as an essential and informative media outlet for the African-American community and all citizens in the mid-South; and

WHEREAS, as this estimable newspaper celebrates its past achievements and continues to serve its readers in the present and future, the *Memphis Tri-State Defender* will celebrate its 55<sup>th</sup> Anniversary on November 3, 2006, such milestone serving as a testament to the exemplary quality of the newspaper's journalism and news reporting; and

WHEREAS, throughout its illustrious history, the *Memphis Tri-State Defender* has served as an enlightening chronicle of not only the experience of African-Americans in the mid-South, but also of the general human experience; as such, its publishers, staff, and owners are

to be commended for their exceptional commitment and dedication to promoting excellence in journalism; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we honor the past and present publishers, employees, editors, and owners of the *Memphis Tri-State Defender* for their dutiful service to the citizens of the State of Tennessee and their entire readership, congratulate them upon the celebration of the newspaper's 55<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, and wish them every success in all future endeavors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.